

# Penny press essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

“ The modern press system is the gift of no one nation. It is only the current stage in the evolution of communication efforts, spanning all continents and at least 10000 years. ” (Emery et al. 2004) but penny press played a vital role in the development of mass media to the present stage. The Penny Press, the newspaper was very much famous for its low price, a penny per paper. The American public enthusiastically welcomes this paper because while other papers were priced around six cents, this paper was sold for just a penny.

Previously, newspapers were considered as the province of the rich, highly literate minority. The price of a year’s subscription equate usually over a full week’s pay for a laborer, and definitely had to be paid in full and invariably in advance. It was just because of the low price made newspapers that news were made available to more than just upper class citizens for the first time. This newspaper strongly helped in the development of the consciousness of the common Americans regarding their surroundings and the politics of their country.

The modern age’s concept of ‘ news’ is in fact the child given birth by the Penny Press. Before the publication of the Penny Press the news of the locality like local politics, crime, natural calamities, and the struggle of the working class never find a space in the newspapers. Thus the Penny Press changed the general policy of the newspapers as, after the publication of this particular newspaper, other newspapers also began paying more attention to the public it served.

The news papers of the country were quick to realize that the specific information and news that interested the six cent public did not get the interest of the penny public. As a result the newspapers started gathering and publishing information from police stations, criminal courts and divorce courts to fill the spaces of their papers and make it more interesting and appealing to their new public-the general public from the streets. The newspapers of the day started competing with each other for publishing the stories first.

In this way the newspapers started developing the social consciousness of the common man because of the revolution brought by the Penny Press. (Thompson, 2004) It is a fact that in the early days of United States the success of the newspapers owes itself to the attitude of the makers of this country towards free press. The reason is that many of the founding fathers of this country believe that in order to maintain liberty and equality in this country free press must be made an integral part of the system.

Thomas Jefferson believed that free press is something more important than the government of the country: “ Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter. ” However, The Penny Press did not pay much attention to the national politics of the country and maintained an apolitical policy both in content as well as in attitude. The breath taking changes made to the newspaper during the Penny Press era set a strong precedent for the way newspapers published today.

The Penny Press set the precedent and in the present days newspaper relies heavily on advertising as a main source of income and that is also the major reason they are still being offered at relatively low prices. It has become a custom with newspapers that they pay more attention to their surrounding communities and report important information and news more carefully and objectively. The focus of newspapers' coverage and attention changed when they no longer depended wholly and solely on subscriptions or daily sales to make a profit. This entire miracle happened just because of The Penny Press.